

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK-BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui: 1) apakah implementasi TBL di dalam teks *recount* dapat meningkatkan nilai membaca komprehensif siswa, 2) opini siswa tentang penggunaan TBL dalam mengajar membaca komprehensif, 3) masalah yang dihadapi siswa dalam pembelajaran membaca komprehensif dengan menggunakan TBL. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes membaca, wawancara, kuesioner, dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata dari *pre-test* adalah 46,8 dan nilai rata-rata dari *post-test* adalah 65,60, dengan nilai penambahan 18,8. Hasil uji hipotesis menunjukkan bahwa hipotesis diterima ($p=0.000$, $p<0.005$), *t-value* 7,714. TBL telah meningkatkan kemampuan membaca komprehensif siswa dalam semua aspek. Opini-opini siswa tentang implementasi TBL dalam membaca komprehensif bagus. Para siswa memiliki masalah dengan batas waktu dan jumlah gambar.

This study is aimed at finding out: 1) whether there is any significance increase of students' reading comprehension achievement after the application of TBL for teaching reading comprehension, 2) the students' opinions about the use of TBL, and 3) the problems faced by the students in learning reading comprehension through TBL. The data were obtained from the reading tests, interview, questionnaire, and observation. The results show that the students' mean score of the pre-test is 46.8 and their mean score of the post-test is 65.60, in which their gain score is 18.8. The result of the hypothesis test showed that the hypothesis of this research was accepted ($p<0.05$, $p=0.000$), *t-value* was 7.714. TBL increased the students reading comprehension ability in all of its aspects. The students' opinions about the implementation of TBL in reading comprehension were good. The students had problems in time limit and amount of picture.

Keywords: reading comprehension, recount text, task-based learning.

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is the readers' active process to understand the meaning of a written text. It is supported by Caldwell (2008: 4) who states that reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Smith (2004:13) states that comprehension is related to the aspects of the world around us, including what the readers' read, to the knowledge, intentions, and expectations the readers already have in minds.

All of the factors that build in together in reaching the students' successes is the complexity of reading comprehension, as Rubin (1982: 207) states that reading comprehension is a complex intellectual process involving a number of abilities that are word meanings and verbal reasoning.

After all, it can be seen that reading comprehension is a complex construction process that is needed to be mastered. According to Troschitz (2005: 4), the intellectual skills are divided into micro and macro skills. Micro skills are what it takes to comprehend a text including word recognition and the understanding of syntax. Macro skills are how successful each reader is in reading comprehension including scanning, skimming, deep understanding of the text, recognising the tone of the text and the author's attitude.

However, based on the fact found in the field, it was found out that the students still face several problems in reading comprehension: 1) identifying main idea, 2) identifying supporting detail, 3) making inference, 4) identifying reference, and 5) understanding difficult vocabulary.

In relation to the background above, this research carried out to deal with the solution of the problem, i.e. Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach. TBL is an approach where the central of the learning activity is a task as a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, producing, and interacting in the target language to convey meaning.

Nunan (2004:1) states that TBLT is the approach that has support students' needs to select the content, increase students interactions in a target language to make it usual, introduce the authentic texts in the learning situation, focus on the learning process better than language, and make own personal experiences as important elements so that the classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom are linked.

Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (2000:114) states that TBL is an approach which has a natural context for language use. Natural context is very effective because it is giving the learners many opportunities to understand each other and to express their own meaning that can facilitate language acquisition in completing the task.

The objectives of the research are to find out:

1. Is there any significance increase of students' reading comprehension achievement after the application of TBL for teaching reading?
2. What are students' opinions about the use of TBL for teaching reading comprehension?
3. What are problems faced by the students in learning reading comprehension through TBL?

METHOD

The design of this research is one group pretest posttest design (Hatch and Farhady, 1982: 20) in which it is intended to investigate whether there is an increasing in students' reading comprehension achievement through TBL. The design is represented by the following figure:

T1 X T2

Where:

T1: The pretest

X: The treatments

T2: The posttest

Hatch and Farhady (1982: 20)

This method is called mixed methods (Creswell, 2003). According to Creswell (2007) as a method, mixed method focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies.

The sample was taken through simple random sampling. Class VIII. I was selected which consists of 25 students. It was applied based on the consideration that every class in the population has the same chance to be chosen and in order to avoid the subjectivity in the research (Setiyadi, 2006: 39).

In collecting the data, the researcher used reading tests to answer to the first question about whether the implementation of TBL increases the students' reading comprehension achievement. Questionnaire was used to answer to the second question about what the students' opinions about the use of TBL for reading comprehension are. Interview was used to answer to the second question and the third question about what problems faced by the students in learning reading comprehension through TBL are, and observation answered to the third question.

The procedures in administering the research are as follows:

1. Identifying the Problems

It is formulated to find out whether there is any significance increase of students' reading comprehension achievement after the application of TBL, what students' opinion about the use of TBL for reading comprehension are, and what the problems faced by the students are.

2. Determining the Population and the Sample

The population of this research was the second year of SMP N 1 Purbolinggo and for the sample just one class has been chosen randomly.

3. Determining Research Instruments

The researcher used four kinds of instruments, they were: reading tests, observation, interviews, and questionnaire.

4. Administering Try-Out Test

A try out administered to determine the validity, the reliability, the level of difficulty and the discrimination power.

5. Determining Final Test of Instruments

Changing the ambiguous statements, distracters, double correct answer, etc.

6. Administering Pre-Test

Pretest was administered to find out the students' basic reading comprehension achievement before giving the treatments by using reading text and 20 items multiple-choice test. It was administered about 45 minutes.

7. Conducting Treatments and Observing

The treatments were classroom activity which was used and applied TBL in reading. In this process, the researcher also observed the students activities.

8. Administering the Post-Test

The posttest are done after giving the treatments by using reading text and 20 items multiple-choice test. It was administered about 40 minutes.

9. Delivering the Questionnaire

This study used close-ended questions (yes/no questions) to help the researcher in selecting data, in order to save time to analyze the data. It was used to know student's opinions about their class experience during the implementation of TBL.

10. Interviewing the students

The students were interviewed to know their opinions towards teaching reading comprehension by using TBL.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research was conducted to find out whether or not there is significance increase of students' reading comprehension achievement after the application of TBL for teaching reading; students' opinions about the use of TBL for teaching reading comprehension; and the problems faced by the students in learning reading comprehension through TBL.

1. The Increase of Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement

The result of this study showed that the students reading comprehension achievement has increased after being taught using TBL in VIII I of SMPN 1 Purbolingo. The students' mean score after being taught using TBL increases

better and significantly from 46.8 in the pretest up to 65.60 in the posttest with the gain score of 18.8.

Specifically, TBL increased the students reading comprehension in all of its aspects, ranging from the most to the lowest: 1) Understanding difficult vocabulary (32.2%) because the students could understand words based on the context of the passage around the unknown words, 2) identifying specific information (23%) because the students are able to extract specific information out of a text, 3) identifying reference (16%) since the students were able to interpret and determine one linguistic expression to another, 4) making inference (3.4%) since the students are able to use available information to comprehend the ideas in unfamiliar items of language, and identifying the main idea (3%) because the students were able to summarizing the passage and looking for repetition of ideas by using TBL. The findings seem to agree with the previous research conducted by Suhartanto (2012). The researcher concluded that the students' reading comprehension and class situation can be improved by implementing the TBL.

According to Willis (1996), TBL is not just about getting learners to do one task and others but it is one component in a larger framework. The pre-task helps students identify the topic and task. The task cycle offers them opportunity to use whatever language they can muster and working altogether in pairs to achieve the goal of the task. Language focus help them recognize particular language features and will lead to deeper understanding of their meanings and uses.

2. Students' Opinions about the Use of TBL in Reading Comprehension

Questionnaire and the interview was conducted to find out the students' opinions in teaching reading using task-based learning. In the questionnaire, 25 students are asked about their responses to TBL. There were 12 questions about the implementation, the importance, the lesson content given, and the role of the teacher of TBL. The result was 97.3% students agreed about them.

In the interview, 10 representatives of the students were chosen from high and low scores based on the mean of pre-test. The result was 100% of the students thought that the implementation of TBL in reading comprehension was good. TBL seems not make them bored, on the contrary make them interested and also easier their reading.

The result above relevant to the previous research conducted by Suhartanto (2012). In his study, being taught using TBL students' interest in reading improved. They were also actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Most of them were able to engage in activities that either helps them to recall or to learn new words and phrases that are essential to the task.

In this study, students liked the tasks. They also liked the setting that leads them to work in a pair so that they can correct and help each other in completing the task, they are helped to communicate and exchange the information as often as possible. Most of the students thought that the learning material was suitable with their needs, and TBL also could make the students have a chance to explore language ability by focusing on students' activity.

Willis (1996: 40) says that language learners need both variety and security. The variety is given by offering them a wide range of topics, text, and task types while the security is given by giving them a framework with three phases. For example, once they know that there will always be a language focus phase after the task cycle, they will begin to worry less about new language they meet during the task cycle because they know they will have a chance to explore it later. Authentic text as a learning material was suitable with their needs. It was in line with (Alfarisi: 2010) who states that after implementing the authentic materials, the students' level of interest in the reading class increase. Finally, their reading comprehension improves well.

3. Problems Students Face in Reading Comprehension through TBL

Based on the result of interview and observation, the problems faced by the students in learning reading comprehension through TBL were found.

Firstly, the students have an aversion to the limited time in the task. Some of them said that the time limit was too short to give them a chance to complete the tasks. In prediction task, the teacher gave students most of the recount text with the title *Cats!* and asked them to write the ending, while in the memory challenge task, the students wrote three questions about the *my holiday* text, that they were sure they could answer correctly to be asked to other pair without read it again.

S1: Time to finish the task is short because I have to write prediction, memorize the text, make and answer the questions in English.

S3: It has many activities but the time is short.

S7: The time to remember in memory task is short. (See the appendix 7)

Based on the interview data, the students feel the time limit was too short because they also have difficulty to write their prediction and make and answer a question in English because they have problems with grammar. It made them waste many time just to think of was it correct or not. Their problems in grammar also can be seen on their prediction sheet and question- answer sheet (Appendices 17 and 18).

The difficulty that the students had problem with the grammatical things can be fixed by the language focus phases in the end of the activity in line with Willis (1996) said that once they knew that there will be a language focus after the task cycle, they will begin to worry less about new language they meet during the task cycle because they know that they will have a chance to explore it later.

Beside their grammatical problem, memorizing also becomes the issue that made them feel that the time limit was sort. In the memory challenge task, they have to read and memorize with the particular speed. According to Willis (1996) speed is the essence in the memory challenge task, tasks are based on the fact that different people will notice and remember different things from a text they have read fast. After the report phase, the class will naturally want to read the piece again to see who remembered the best and whose first impressions were the more accurate.

Secondly, the students have an aversion to the limited picture in the task. It can be seen from the interview data above.

S2: It lacks of picture to help in making the ending

S5: It lacks of picture to help me understanding the text. (Appendices 17 and 18).

Referring to the data above, the students felt that the amount of picture was not enough to help them completing the task especially in prediction task. They needed some clues to understand and to help them in predicting the text. According to Willis (1996) it is far better to give a range of clues that provide text and look intriguing. Only a title to predict from allows students very little to work on and encourages random and unmotivated guesses.

However, after implementing it more frequently, the students were gradually able to overcome those problems. The class atmosphere was more active than previous meeting. It can be conclude that the students understood how to implement the TBL when they had explicit training and more practice of using TBL.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussions, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. There is improvement of students' reading comprehension achievement after being treated using TBL at the second grade of SMPN 1 Purbolinggo. This can be seen from the difference of the mean of pretest was 46.8 up to 65.60 in the posttest with the gain score of 18.8. The result of the hypothesis test showed that the hypothesis of this research was accepted ($p < 0.05, p = 0.000$). TBL can be used to increase all sub-skills of reading comprehension, ranging from the most to the lowest: 1) Understanding difficult vocabulary mostly increased significantly by 32.2 %, 2) identifying specific information 23 %, 3) identifying reference 16%, 4) making inference 13.4%, while 5) identifying the main idea is the least affected, in which the increase is 3%.

2. In reference to the data gained from the questionnaire and interview, it is found that the students' opinions about the implementation of TBL in reading comprehension are good. TBL does not make them bored, on the contrary make them interested and read easier. Most of the students thought that the implementation of TBL was effective to increase students' motivation and students' reading comprehension achievement.
3. There are several problems faced by the students in learning reading comprehension through TBL. Firstly, the Students have an aversion to the time limit and the use of picture in the task. Some of them said that the time limit was too short to give them a chance to complete the task. The students feel the time limit was too short because they also have difficulty to write their prediction and make and answer a question in English because they have problems with grammar. It made them waste many time just to think of was it correct one or not. Beside their grammatical problem, memorizing also becomes the issue that made them feel that the time limit was sort. In the memory challenge task, they have to read and memorize with the particular speed. Secondly, the students felt that the amount of picture also was not enough to help them completing the task especially in prediction task. They needed some clues to understand and to help them in predicting the text. However, after implementing the TBL more frequently, the students were gradually able to overcome those problems.

Referring to the conclusions above, the researcher would like to propose some suggestions below:

1. Suggestions to the Teacher

- a. In this research, it was found that identifying the main idea and making inference aspects need to be paid more attentions since they are the least affected during the application of TBL. This can be done by giving more activities for both aspects.
- b. To minimize the problems, the teachers are suggested to make highly good preparation before applying TBL such as mastering its procedure to make the students able to maximize the time limit in every task, and preparing the visual clues of the material in order to help the students doing the prediction task easily.

2. Suggestions to the Future Researchers

In this research, the researcher conducted TBL in teaching reading comprehension of recount text at second year students of Junior High School to investigate the implementation of TBL in reading comprehension achievement. Future researchers can conduct TBL on different level of students such as in Senior High School, and for the other texts such as narrative, descriptive, explanation etc.

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